

THE

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

July 2010

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The July luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, July 15, 2010, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. The guest speaker will be Ellis Anderson, who will speak on her recently published book, *Under Surge, Under Siege, the Odyssey of Bay St. Louis and Katrina*. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. Please call **by noon on Wednesday, July 14**, to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-five people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare. The price of the lunch is \$10.00.

ANNUAL CEMETERY TOUR

Even though October is still a few months away, it's not too early to begin thinking about and planning the Hancock County Historical Society Annual Cemetery Tour. It will be held on Halloween night, Sunday, October 31, 2010, at Cedar Rest Cemetery on Second Street. We will need volunteers to help prepare the cemetery for the tour (mark the path, etc.), to portray citizens buried there, to act as guides, and to serve at the Lobrano House.



Pearlington Cemetery

Reflections of Hancock County Collected By S. G. Thigpen

Compiled and edited by
Eddie Coleman

Yellow Fever!

There was terror and panic in Pearlington one bright summer day in 1905. People became so frightened that they left their homes and all they possessed on an hour's notice. If there were word of an atomic bomb attack today, there would not be more fright and

terror than in Pearlington late in the evening on that summer day when the public health doctor came to town to see a sick man and pronounced his disease as yellow fever.

Mr. Sam Russ said, "My own family bundled up what they could carry with them, and in less than two hours were on their way to my grandfather's place about seven miles north of Pearlington in the middle of the night. [The following account was related to Mr. Thigpen by Sam Russ, a well-known resident of the area.]

"Almost everyone left as quickly as they could. My wife's family went with a neighbor family

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor
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108 Cue Street

Telephone/Fax [228] 467-4090

Email address:

hancockcountyhis@bellsouth.net

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Marianne Pluim, Webmaster**LOBRANO HOUSE
HOURS**MONDAY — FRIDAY
10:00AM — 3:00PM
Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)**MISSION STATEMENT**

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

to live in an old church building about five miles north of Pearlinton. Others scattered over the countryside, staying in old buildings, even in barns and stables. Some were so fortunate as to have friends and relatives in isolated areas to which they escaped. Some went as far away as Sones Chapel—about thirty-five miles—to stay. Mr. Len Sones told of people coming to their home and staying for months to escape this dread disease.

"When all these people left, a few stayed behind to guard and protect property. I was working at the Poitevent and Favre store, and the store manager, my brother, and I stayed behind. Joe Saucier was sheriff of Hancock County at that time. He called me over the lumber company phone—the only phone there—and deputized me deputy sheriff—swore me in over the phone.

"Without phones, radio, TV, newspaper, or even good roads, I have often wondered how the news of the yellow fever spread so fast. Within hours practically everybody within the whole area knew of the yellow fever in Pearlinton. Cases appeared at other points along the coast and in New Orleans about the same time. Within a very short time Governor Vardaman clamped on what was called a shotgun quarantine and sent soldiers from the National Guard to enforce it.

"The soldiers kept anyone from entering or leaving the Pearlinton, Logtown, and Napoleon areas. They patrolled the roads, the river, and the beaches along the gulf. Mail stopped coming in. There was no contact with the outside world except the noisy old phone to Bay St. Louis which was about as isolated as Pearlinton as they had a similar condition

there. Even up her at Picayune and Nicholson, no passengers were allowed to get off the trains coming from the South.

"This condition prevailed for three or four months or until frost came in the fall since it was known that yellow fever would stop when frost came. By 1905 people had learned, because of the work of Dr. Gorgas in the Canal Zone, that mosquitoes carried yellow fever, and this knowledge helped to keep down the ravages of this dread disease.

"Getting something to eat and carrying on the ordinary business of living got to be a big problem. Though quarantined the saw mill at Logtown kept running and shipping lumber. They would load the lumber in Logtown and send it down stream to a point below Pearlinton. There they would tie up the boat, and everybody leave. Schooners would then come in and load lumber for shipment to its destination. Then the boat crew would go back and get the boat. Food was also shipped in this way.

"My family, except my father, stayed over at my grandpa's home for several months. Food was no problem there as he had plenty of farm and garden produce and livestock of all kinds to furnish meat. Also there was plenty fish and game. Another thing about Grandpa—everybody around him worked. He kept the male members of the family busy producing food and the women busy drying fruits, and preserving food in the ways they used back then. My father was a log buyer for the saw mill and was away on a buying trip when the quarantine was put on, and he could not come home.

"My wife's folks with the other family stayed in the old church long enough to grow a garden and get part of their food from

it. Also there was plenty game there. They cooked in an old shed near the church and they all slept in the church building. Many other families had like experiences, some of them suffering real hardship. The company store stayed open in Pearlinton and doled out food in limited quantities to prevent anyone from starving.

"While there were only two cases of yellow fever in Pearlinton, the 1905 epidemic along the coast and in New Orleans was one of the worst on record, many people dying from this dread disease. An uncle of mine died over in Handsboro.

"Yellow fever was nothing new in Pearlinton. Back when I grew up, people talked about the epidemic of 1858 and later ones. My great Uncle Edward and his wife both died in that one. A grandchild of theirs died in 1878. About the worst epidemic of all was in 1898. Three members of my grandfather's family died in 1890 of typhoid fever, so you can see why my family would be so scared of these diseases.

"Everybody, the well-to-do and the poorest people were in the same boat when it came to yellow fever—this disease was no respecter of persons. Mr. Favre, who was about the best off man in Pearling-

ton, was the first person to have the fever in 1905. Only the doctor and the nurse were permitted to see those sick with this fever. The local doctor called a meeting as soon as yellow fever was discovered and explained what was best to do. He warned us not to let mosquitoes bite us and to be careful to drink pure water. While most of the white people had left town, most of the blacks stayed on. The blacks did not want to leave, and there was really no place for them to go since the blacks in Logtown and Gainesville were so deathly afraid they would not admit anyone from Pearlinton into their homes. Even though it was hot summer weather, they shut themselves up in their homes to hide from the mosquitoes and stayed there. They must have suffered terribly from the heat.... They were completely obsessed with a sense of dread and danger. Back then no one, black or white, had ever heard of screen wire. The only way to keep mosquitoes out was to shut the doors and windows or sleep under nets, and this was about as hot as keeping the doors and windows closed. As deputy sheriff it was part of my duty to try to prevent too much hardship. When I went to one of these houses, the folks would be most careful about opening the door, but

they knew me, and I had little trouble. As always in times of trouble and distress, there were those who robbed and stole from the unfortunate. These characters had to be watched and guarded against.

"No meetings of any kind were allowed. Everybody was afraid of everybody else. Looking back now, I find it hard to realize the dread and terror of those times, although I was there. Imagine, if you can, on an hour's notice, everybody having to leave their homes and all they possess to go to you know not where—no cars or transportation except walking or riding in a wagon, and you must carry with you any food and items needed for an indefinite stay.

"I had never seen soldiers till they came to Pearlinton in 1905. We found them to be just good common country people like those who lived in our own community. They cooperated with the people, yet they were firm in enforcing their orders. I think their handling of the situation was a big reason for the yellow fever scare's having no serious consequences.

"After the frost came, those who had left began to return home, but the soldiers thoroughly fumigated each home with sulphur before the owners entered. I helped in this work, and it was a big job. It was three weeks of hard work, and all that time Pearlinton smelled like sulphur. Before the soldiers left, they put on a special drill with everybody, white and black, attending. It was a real celebration, and everybody had a big time. We had gotten to know the soldiers well, and we hated to see them go.

"To show you how seriously people took the presence of yellow fever, John Seal, the justice of the peace, started to Bay St. Louis with a prisoner. Armed guards would not let him enter Bay



The conquest of yellow fever has saved innumerable lives throughout the world.

St. Louis. They made him turn around and go back to Pearlington. In fact, he said they gave him ten minutes to turn around and go, or they would shoot him. [People] used to tell it on him that he got turned around and started back so fast that he had nine minutes to spare. After the emergency was over, I resigned as deputy sheriff. That was the last big yellow fever scare in that area."

Thigpen, S. G. *Pearl River: Highway to Glory Land.* Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1965.

NEW GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES AT THE HANCOCK COUNTY LIBRARY

At the June 17 luncheon meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society, Patty Furr, Executive Director of the Hancock County Library System, gave a quick update of the new online genealogical sources which will become available to library cardholders by the end of June. The ProQuest Genealogy Bundle consists of six core data sets:

—**U. S. Federal Censuses;** these include every existing federal census in the United States from 1790 through 1930; the collection covers more than 140 million names;

—**Genealogy and local history books** which deliver more than 7

million digitized page images from over 26,000 family histories, local histories, and other books;

—**Periodical Source Index (PERSI),** published by the Allen County Public Library, and recognized as the most comprehensive index of genealogy and local history periodicals; it contains more than 2 million records covering titles published around the world since 1800;

—**Revolutionary War records,** containing original images from pension and bounty land warrant application files which help to identify more than 80,000 American Army, Navy, and Marine officers and enlisted men from the Revolutionary War era;

—**Freedman's Bank Records** with more than 480,000 names of bank applicants, their dependents, and heirs from 1865—1874, offering valuable data that can provide important clues to tracing African-American ancestors prior to and immediately after the Civil War;

—**LexisNexis U. S. Serial Set,** recording the memorials, petitions, and private relief actions made to the U. S. Congress back to 1789 with a total of more than 480,000 pages of information.

In addition to this invaluable ProQuest Genealogy Bundle, genealogy researchers with library cards will also be able to use Ancestry.com free of charge in the library.

TREE REGISTRATION

Registration of magnolia and oak trees has resumed after its suspension because of Hurricane Katrina. The Bay/Waveland Garden Club has volunteered to "do the leg work," and the Historical Society will field the calls and pass the requests on to the Garden Club. If you have a tree or trees which you would like to register, please call the Historical Society at 228-467-4090.

BOOKS FOR SALE AT LOBRANO HOUSE

Bay Saint Louis: Celebrating the First 300 Years
By the HCHS (\$15.00)

A nostalgic keepsake of the city's history including descriptions and pictures of many of the historic buildings and houses especially those along Beach Boulevard prior to Katrina

*Blueberry Peaches,
Red Robin Pie*

By Stella LaViolette

and Paul Estronza La Violette (\$25.00)

An annotated cookbook of Gulf Coast recipes

Heritage Cookbook

By the HCHS (\$15.00)

A collection of our members' favorite family recipes

Holly

By Paul La Violette (\$20.00)

An intriguing anthology of tales of a tomcat living in a beach house on the Gulf Coast

Katrina Cookbook

By Charlet Russell (\$19.95)

A collection of recipes by Bayou Tours

One Dog, Two Dogs, Three Dogs, Four...

By Paul La Violette (\$20.00)

Twice told tales of several dogs living in a beach house on the Gulf Coast

Scrapbook of Treasured Memories

By Connie Heitzmann and Betty Stechmann (\$20.00)

A book of art, photography, and reminiscence of the Gulf Coast

Sink or Be Sunk

By Paul La Violette (\$30.00)

A recounting of the naval battle in the Mississippi Sound preceding the Battle of New Orleans in 1812

Vintage Photographs of Hancock County

By

Lori Gordon

(\$15.00 per photograph)

These photographs come from the vast photographic collection of the Historical Society. Each photograph has been restored and matted by local artist Lori Gordon.

West Side Stories

*Before, During, and After on Mississippi's
West Coast*

Photographs and Commentary by

Vicki Niolet and Betty Stechmann (\$28.00)

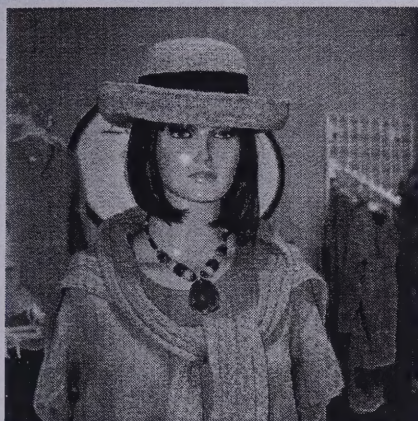
A Pictorial of our homes and communities in Pass Christian, Bay St. Louis, Waveland, Lakeshore, and Clermont Harbor

A White Egret in the Shallows

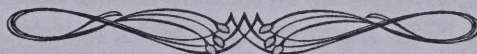
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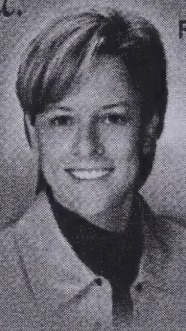
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Second Saturday, July 10—Christa Allen will
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from 4—6 P. M.

Bay Books also has copies of two recent
books on Hurricane Katrina:

Under Surge, Under Siege by Ellis Anderson

and

Rising from Katrina by Kathleen Koch

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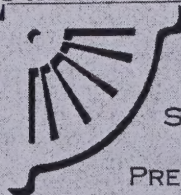


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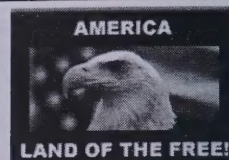
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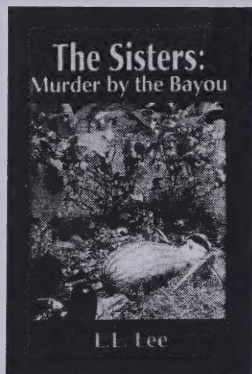


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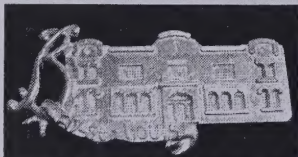
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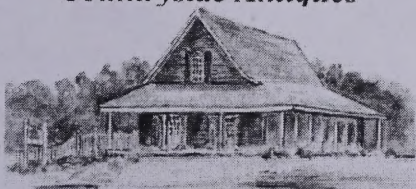
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